

Varsity Order under review

By N. M. HARUN

The next 'regular monthly meeting' of the Vice-Chancellors of the universities of the country with the Chancellor is scheduled to be held on Nov. 5. The issue of the 'updating' of the 1973 University Order will most likely come up again for discussion in this forum.

The Chancellor of the universities, President H.M. Ershad, formally asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to "expedite" the task of 'updating' the University Order in the last 'regular monthly meeting' of the Vice-Chancellors held on Oct. 7.

On Oct. 12, the Parliamentary Subcommittee on

Education also discussed the subject of the University Order.

In the meeting of the Parliamentary Subcommittee, many expressed serious dissatisfaction at the state in the universities and held a view that the universities should be brought under more discipline.

The universities run virtually with government grant. So many in the Parliamentary Subcommittee meeting held that the universities should be regulated in a stricter manner with a view to ensuring better utilization of public money. They also believed that the Chan-

cellor should have a bigger role.

There were some sobering views, maintaining that the universities did need to improve but the best thing to do would be to ask the universities themselves to come out with necessary corrective measures, including suggesting possible amendments to the 1973 University Order. The University Order can be amended by the parliament or by ordinance by the President.

The last meeting of the University Grants Commission, held on Oct. 28, took up its new assignment

See Page 8

Varsity order under review

From Page 1

given to it by the Chancellor to "expedite" the "finalization" of 'updating' the University Order "in consultation with all concerned." Three Vice-Chancellors are members of the UGC.

It is understood that the Chairman of the UGC will report to the Chancellor about the progress of its new assignment in the Nov. 5 "regular monthly meeting" of the Vice-Chancellors.

The UGC actually held preliminary discussions. The discussions touched upon subjects like "well-defined powers" of the Chancellor, alternative procedures for preparing the panel of persons from whom the Chancellor appoints the Vice-Chancellors, alternative ways of holding elections of university teachers to the Senate, Syndicate and other bodies, stricter financial discipline, and stricter methods of accountability of the university teachers and employees.

At the UGC meeting, also, there were voices which suggested slower pace and maintained that the university authorities should be asked to take the initiatives in suggesting improvement in the University Order, and making necessary changes in the university statutes, ordinances and regulations.

It may be mentioned here that the 1988 report of the Bangladesh Jatiyo Shikhya Commission (Bang-

ladesh National Education Commission), popularly known as the Mofizuddin Education Commission, severely criticized the 1973 University Order.

The Mofizuddin Commission Report pointed out abuses in the system of elections to different bodies of the universities, including the nomination of panels for Vice-Chancellors, elections to the Syndicate, Senate and deanship. It also criticized the system of rotation of chairmanship of the various departments of the universities.

The Mofizuddin Commission Report, however, did not suggest any remedies. It, instead, suggested that the government should "immediately form a high-powered committee and take necessary final decision in the light of the recommendations of that committee" to straighten the affairs of the universities.

Thus, the report of the Mofizuddin Education Commission, the Chancellor's directive to the UGC, the interest of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Education and the UGC's new assignment indicate that the authorities concerned want to do urgently something with the 1973 University Order with the avowed intention of improving the standard of the universities, both in the academic and administrative fields.